The Bus Stop Dimension
by Jonathan Olvera

The sun gleamed off the steel towers in front of me, their faces covered in glass and mirrors, as though the buildings were posing for a photograph of themselves. I was too tired to care. The bus hadn't come for an hour, and I had given up timing my yawns. So, naturally, I stretched across the bench at the bus stop, laid my head on my backpack, and closed my eyes. Just for a moment.

When I woke up, I knew instantly that something was wrong. The concrete felt softer, almost like it was breathing beneath me. I sat up, rubbed my eyes, and looked around. The world hadn't changed much—same streets, same towers—but something about the details was wrong. Very wrong.

The buildings inhaled. Their windows fogged, as though they were exhaling little sighs of boredom. The trees along the road waved without wind, twitching like they were scratching themselves. A bird landed nearby, coughed politely, then took off again.

I froze.

The road shifted its blacktop like a snake shedding its skin. It shuffled to the side, groaning as if it had a bad back. Then it stretched, yawned, and blinked its glowing yellow lane lines at me.

"Morning, sleepyhead," it said.

I almost swallowed my tongue.

The cars stopped at the light were chuckling and gossiping. "Nice shine on your bumper today, Carl," said one. Another beeped. "Thanks, got waxed yesterday. Looking fresh, huh?"

I stared. Nobody else seemed to care. Pedestrians strolled by sipping coffee. They didn't blink when a minivan and a motorcycle exchanged jokes about traffic. It was normal to them. I was the only one losing my mind.

Of course, this was the exact moment the police showed up.

Two officers walked over, one chewing gum, the other writing on a clipboard that kept folding and unfolding like an origami bird. They squinted at me.

"Sir," one said, "we've had complaints that you're… uh… talking to the sidewalk."

"I wasn't—well, it was talking to me first!" I blurted.

The officers exchanged glances. Their radios crackled to life on their shoulders. "Don't believe him," one radio squawked. "He's lying."

"Shut up, radio," said the other.

“Make me,” the radio said.

The officer sighed and smacked it, which only made the radio laugh harder.

“So,” the gum-chewer asked me, “are you saying the city is… communicating with you?”

“Yes!” I cried. “Everything’s alive here. The buildings are breathing, the streets have eyes, and that stop sign just winked at me!”

The stop sign winked again.

“Hallucinating,” the other officer muttered, scribbling on his clipboard, which flapped angrily and tried to bite his pen.

That’s when it hit me. I wasn’t in my world anymore. I’d gone to sleep at a bus stop and woken up in another dimension—a place where the city itself was alive.

And it didn’t like me.

The buildings leaned closer, their glass faces shimmering like teeth. Doors creaked open without anyone touching them, whispering, “Come inside, just for a minute…”

The traffic lights flickered impatiently. “Hurry up. Leave. Something bad is coming.”

I didn’t waste time. I bolted across the street. The asphalt lurched under my feet like a trampoline, trying to trip me. Cars honked in protest. “Watch it! Jogging is illegal here!”

I ran anyway, panting, heart hammering, until I reached a parking lot. But even there, I wasn’t safe. The airplanes circling above bent their wings like vultures. “What’s he doing here? Intruder! Intruder!” they howled in booming voices.

I sprinted harder, zigzagging past lampposts that tried to kick me. The vending machine rattled and shouted, “Buy a soda or else!” I ignored it.

Finally, I tripped over a concrete block that hadn’t been there a second ago. The ground yanked it out of nowhere just to trip me. I went down hard.

My head hit the pavement. Everything spun. My mind did a flip.

When I came to, I was back at the bus stop. Normal city. Normal cars. Nobody breathing or talking or stretching. The bench was cold and uncomfortable again.

For a long time I sat there, dizzy, wondering if I’d dreamed it all. Maybe I had. Maybe I’d simply nodded off in the Arizona sun and let my imagination play tricks on me.

But then, across the street, the crosswalk signal blinked. Not the usual stick figure. Just two words in glowing green:

“SEE YOU SOON.”